



Salt Lake City
Targeted Research Enhancement Program
Director: Matthew H. Samore, MD
Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2008

The mission of the Salt Lake IDEAS (Informatics, Decision-Enhancement, and Surveillance) Center is to build a preeminent community of researchers who improve the care of veterans by integrating surveillance, decision support, and other information technology-based interventions to enhance the effectiveness of patient and clinician behavior. Our long-term vision is to champion the translation of innovative informatics-based tools and interventions into the mainstream of VA health services research and healthcare delivery. The name of our center reflects our inter-related research themes, namely, Informatics, decision-support, and surveillance.

The IDEAS Center expanded significantly in FY2008. Our Center now includes 8 core investigators, 4 affiliate investigators, and 14 associate investigators. A ninth core investigator, Jennifer Garvin, has been recruited to join the IDEAS Center starting this November. Our VA-based research enterprise encompasses a total of 47 research staff. The growth of our program has been fueled by recent grant awards that capitalize on our experience and expertise in informatics. These new sources of funding are described in more detail in section 3.

In March, 2008, we submitted a proposal to transition our TREP to a REAP. This application was successful and in FY09 our funding as a REAP begins. REAP status will facilitate our further expansion. We anticipate recruiting at least three new REAP investigators during the next year, including a health economist, a senior informatician, and a senior physician-health services researcher. We will recruit an Academic Manager to assist with manuscript production and an Associate Director for Education to develop educational materials for teaching health services researchers about informatics methods.

We continue to benefit from a close relationship with the Salt Lake City Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC). The GRECC is actively recruiting health services researchers with an interest in aging, who will also contribute as IDEAS investigators. The VA Western Region Rural Health Resource Center, headed by an Associate Investigator in the IDEAS Center, Byron Bair, MD, has been newly funded. This center will create numerous opportunities for applied, collaborative health services research in rural settings and will support additional recruitments.